



National Commission on the Future of the Army
2530 Crystal Drive, Zachary Taylor Building, Suite 5000
Arlington, VA 22202

SUBJECT: National Commission on the Future of the Army (NCFA) Minutes - Site Visit
Fort Carson and Colorado Springs, Colorado

Date: 3 September 2015

Format: Round table discussions and briefings

Attendees:

Commissioner GEN (R) Carter Ham
Commissioner GEN (R) James Thurman
Commissioner LTG (R) Jack Stultz
NCFA Executive Director MG (R) Ray Carpenter
COL Rich Miller NCFA Staff
Mr. Jim Boatner NCFA Staff
Mr. Mark Pizzuto Alternate Designated Federal Officer (ADFO)
Mr. John Thurman NCFA Staff
Mr. Eric Magnell NCFA Staff

Documents Submitted to Commission:

- (1) 4ID Command Brief
- (2) NCFA itinerary for 3 Sep 2015 (Division Protocol)
- (3) 4ID Artillery Command Brief
- (4) FORSCOM and 4ID Implementation Orders (OPORD 15-10 and Frag Order 1) for activation of Division Artillery (DIVARTY) units
- (5) 52nd ENG BN Command Brief
- (6) 10th SFG Command Brief (classified).
- (7) 168th Regional Training Institute briefing

NCFA Commissioners and staff departed hotel at 0645 via ground transportation and moved to Cheyenne Mountain Resort, Colorado Springs CO for breakfast with the Commanding General, 4th Infantry Division (4ID), MG Ryan Gonsalves. MAJ Royce Baker, 4ID Fire Support Element (FSE), also attended.

MG Gonsalves greeted all NCFA personnel and the group conducted a round table discussion during breakfast. The Commissioners, Executive Director and ADFO began the meeting with a reminder of Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) requirements, which meant notes would be taken and included in minutes.

Key discussion points from the discussion:

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- The status of the crew and UH-60 helicopter that had experienced a “hard landing” the day before was the first item discussed (two crewmembers sustained injuries; neither life threatening).
- The 4ID is likely to be the Regionally Aligned Force for Europe. 4ID could provide the mechanized capability. 4ID Mission Command Element (MCE) is currently on 179-day orders in Europe, but there is concern that the Soldiers are not getting credit for “deployment” even though they are away from home. Speakers also noted the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB) in Europe is being reduced to a Table of Distribution and Allowances organization (not organized for warfighting mission).
- There is strong support for reestablishing the DIVARTY. In the current execution order, the chain of command for the fires battalions does not run to the DIVARTY Commander.
- Flying hours for 4ID aviators was discussed. There was a caution that the effect of reduced flying hours normally doesn’t become apparent right away, but eventually shows up in the accident rates.
- A strong partnership and supportive relationship exists with the Colorado National Guard.

Breakfast discussion adjourned at 0820 and the entire group moved by vans to 4ID Headquarters, Building 1435, arriving at 0835. The first engagement at 4ID Headquarters was the presentation of the 4ID Command Brief. Attendees in addition to NCFA personnel were:

MG Ryan Gonsalves, Division Commander, 4ID
CSM Michael Crosby, Division CSM, 4ID
COL Douglas Sims, Chief of Staff 4 ID
COL Gregg Engler, Division Staff Judge Advocate
COL Lori Robinson, Brigade Commander 4th CAB
LTC Christine Enriquez, G-1
LTC Bryan Love, G-2
LTC Steven, Cho, G-3
LTC Christine Massey, G-4
LTC Jason Rosenstrauch, G-5
LTC Shawn Carden, G-6
LTC Matthew Sheiffer, G-7
LTC Garvey Wright, G-8
LTC James Cutchin, G-9
LTC Cory Delger, Division Fires Support Coordinator
LTC Robert Price, Division Surgeon
LTC Robert Sketch, Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion Commander
LTC Bryan Ross, G-4 Army National Guard
LTC Thomas Rivenbark, G-5 Army National Guard
MAJ Royce Baker, 4ID Fires Support Element
MSG Brent Williams, Division Public Affairs Officer

The meeting convened at 0847 with opening remarks by Commissioner Ham about the NCFA’s purpose and mission. The ADFO explained the Federal Advisory Committee and the Government in the Sunshine Acts statutory requirements, and further

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explained how these laws applied to the meeting. Participants were reminded that meeting minutes and all unclassified briefing material would be posted on the NCFA website for public transparency.

Operational tempo (OPTEMPO) is clearly still high across the board – especially in Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) and Combat Aviation Brigades (CABs). 4ID manning described as difficult with units deploying at 85% strength. Although Fort Carson and 4ID did not lose much end strength in recent announced reductions, the 25% reduction to division headquarters manning and possible civilian reduction in FY17 were mentioned. Local community support assessed as excellent with no recent problems concerning noise abatement (aviation and field artillery) issues or preservation of training areas including Pinyon Canyon maneuver site.

4ID is a 'balanced' division with attached IBCT, Stryker, and ABCT. This provides many training opportunities, but also presents some challenges should the division deploy with attached BCTs. Challenges include IBCT mobility, ability to provide training support across the division, and maintenance depth plus lack of standardization, e.g., not about to share parts across units. Division has been regionally aligned with Europe for about two years and is deploying some personnel and units for 179 days. These Soldiers do not get credit for an operational “deployment” when calculating deploy to dwell ratio. With 90-person Division MCE forward in Europe, Division headquarters is only operationally deployable or available to Europe. 12th CAB capacity in Europe described as very limited ('a brigade in name only') that needs more lift capability for Europe. Concerns about losing approximately 50 full time personnel as part of multi-component Division Headquarters initiative were also discussed.

1 SBCT currently has a battalion aligned to NORTHCOM and 2 IBCT has just received KFOR (Kosovo Force) mission on top of both an NTC rotation and BDE (-) OEF mission. A discussion followed on whether the KFOR mission was better suited for National Guard or Army Reserve units. Time available for FORSCOM directed AC-RC division and brigade level training partnerships varies greatly; appears OPTEMPO preventing some units from establishing strong partnership to date.

Concern was expressed about reductions in training funds scheduled for next year. This year 4ID CAB got additional \$13 million in September to support National Training Center (NTC) and Network Integration Evaluation (NIE) train up periods, but next year flying hours will drop.

The next topic of discussion was the ongoing efforts to reactivate DIVARTY. DIVARTY's primary role will be to certify battalion level training for direct support battalions and fire support elements.

The meeting adjourned at 0945 and NCFA personnel moved by van to building 1351, 4ID DIVARTY Headquarters, arrived at 0953. DIVARTY Commander and selected staff provided 4ID DIVARTY Command Brief.

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COL Michael Oeschger, DIVARTY Commander, 4ID
CSM Thomas Parsley, DIVARTY Command Sergeants Major
MAJ Charles Knoll, DIVARTY XO
MAJ Samuel Linn, DIVARTY S3
LTC Neil Snyder, 2-77 Field Artillery (FA) Commander, Direct Support to 2IBCT
CSM Eric Macher, 2-77 Field Artillery Command Sergeants Major
LTC Cory Delger, Deputy Division Fires Support Coordinator, 4ID
MAJ Royce Baker, 4ID Fire Support Element (FSE)

The meeting convened at 0957 with opening remarks by Commissioner Ham about the NCFA's purpose, mission and legal requirements. ADFO explained the Federal Advisory Committee and the Government in the Sunshine Acts' statutory requirements, and how these requirements applied to the meeting.

Discussion focused on reactivation of DIVARTYs in active duty divisions. The initial operating capability for 4ID DIVARTY planned for 1st Quarter FY16. Fires battalions organic to BCTs will be attached to DIVARTY for training and maintenance oversight starting 1 Feb 16. Goal is to provide better trained fire support leaders and training certified cannon batteries and battalions for combined arms collective training. Not all BCT commanders support attachment of fires units to DIVARTY.

Working many issues at DIVARTY level including readiness reporting for artillery personnel and equipment still assigned to BCTs; only 70% manned despite October e-date; shortfalls in maintenance with no assigned Brigade Support Battalion; budget authority; human resources/talent management currently at BCT; S4 and legal staff; and civilian employees manning. Other challenges to activation include establishing and certifying higher echelon fire support proficiency (division warfighter exercise in Feb 16) and operational mobility of headquarters and FSEs. DIVARTY described as uniquely able to effectively synchronize across the division because fire support sections/elements are in every maneuver unit.

DIVARTY commander currently provides a composite readiness report to the 4ID, CG on fire support manning, training and equipping status. Attachment of personnel results in friction and workarounds in personnel and training management as well as other administrative areas. Finally, once operational, 4ID DIVARTY is a logical training partner for 169th FA Brigade, Colorado ARNG.

The meeting adjourned at 1100 and NCFA personnel moved by van to Building 3605, 52nd Brigade Engineer Battalion (BEB) Headquarters, Fort Carson, CO.

Attendees for BEB discussion in addition to NCFA personnel were:

LTC Ralph Radka, Battalion Commander, 52d Engineer (EN)
CSM John Johnson, Battalion CSM, 52d EN
COL Matt Cody, Brigade Commander, 2 IBCT
CSM Sammy Sparger, Brigade CSM, 2 IBCT
MAJ Stewart Gast, Battalion XO, 52d EN
LTC Damon Knarr, Division Engineer

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MAJ Louis Johnson, Division Engineer

The meeting convened at 1115 with opening remarks by Commissioner Ham about the NCFA's purpose, mission and legal requirements. ADFO explained the statutory requirements from Federal Advisory Committee and the Government in the Sunshine Acts' statutory requirements, and how these requirements applied to the meeting.

LTC Radka provided a briefing beginning with a discussion of the mission and capabilities of the battalion. He described the unique organization of the Brigade Engineer Battalion which includes not only Sapper, route clearance, and light equipment companies, but also a Military Intelligence (MI) and signal company. The unit has recently undergone reorganization and the MI and Signal companies were placed in the Engineer battalion because there is no divisional MI or signal battalion.

This mixed type of organization presents challenges for training and employment. The battalion is focusing their training on preparation for an upcoming NTC rotation that would have a full spectrum of operations focus. Many of the Soldiers have not had experience preparing for decisive action across the full spectrum of operations. NCOs have to focus on individual and small unit training for traditional engineer skills in decisive action rather than just counter-insurgency operations. The resident knowledge on dismounted Sapper skills is lacking for both Soldiers and NCOs, so this is the focus of the battalion's training.

Commissioners noted some have said recapturing readiness for full spectrum of operations is an easy task, but even with great Soldiers the transition is difficult and challenging. We cannot underestimate the cost and level of complexity to recapture these skills.

The main difference between the Engineer battalion supporting 2IBCT and the 3ABCT engineers is equipment. 3ABCT has Bradley engineer vehicles, D7 bulldozers, and bridging equipment. The 52d BEB is the only Engineer Battalion in 4ID without organic bridging assets.

The battalion has endured a significant amount of distraction during the reorganization, which has made any significant training difficult. Therefore, the upcoming NTC rotation gives the brigade and battalion an opportunity to train without other distractions. The reorganization of the battalion has resulted in the inability to train in collective tasks, so the focus right now is at individual/squad/platoon level tasks. The battalion should be trained at the company level after NTC. Part of this was the result of significant personnel turnover associated with the reorganization that was not halted until the battalion was "fenced" for deployment and the upcoming NTC rotation.

The battalion's diverse mission set has also created additional issues that are only mitigated somewhat by the fact that many engineer officers have previously been assigned to modular Brigade Support Battalions that included engineer, MI and signal units. This provided additional experience on how to employ those assets, but is not ideal and requires the engineer officers to work closely with the brigade S2 and S6 to properly employ the units assigned to the engineer battalion.

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Despite the turmoil associated with reorganization, reenlistment has not been a problem for the 52d BEB, although for 40-50% of the battalion's Soldiers this will be their first deployment.

The meeting adjourned at 1215 and NCFA personnel moved van to Wolf Dining Facility, Building 1444, for lunch. NCFA personnel, minus Commissioner Ham, shared meal and informal discussions with selected Fort Carson junior leaders listed below.

1LT Nolan Miles, Platoon Leader, 52d ENG, 2IBCT
1LT Lamar Cravens, Platoon Leader, 52d ENG, 2IBCT
SSG Jon Stone, Squad Leader, 52d ENG, 2IBCT
SSG Ryan Burke, Squad Leader, 52d ENG, 2IBCT
CPT Andrew Lohrenz, Logistics Officer, 2-77 FA, 2IBCT
1LT Elyse Ping Medvigy, Fire Direction Officer, 2-77 FA, 2IBCT
SFC Floyd Dugan, Fire Direction Center NCOIC, 2-77 FA, 2IBCT
SFC Matthew Burdick, Cannon Platoon Sergeant, 2-77 FA, 2IBCT
CPT Benjamin Monson, 10th SFG (A)
CPT Eric Barger, 10th SFG (A)
MSG Kevin Burford, 10th SFG (A)
SFC (P) Jacob Lindholm, 10th SFG (A)
MSG Christine Wilkins, Warrior Leader Course (WLC) Manager, 168th Regional Training Institute (RTI)
SFC Johnny Napier, WLC Chief Instructor, 168th RTI
SSG Anthony Chavez, Centennial Training Site Housing Manager, 168th RTI
SGT Stephen Fleming, WLC Operations NCO, 168th RTI

Lunch ended at 1330 and NCFA personnel moved to 10th Special Forces Group (SFG) HQ via ground transportation. They arrived at 1343.

Commissioner and NCFA staff then participated in a classified discussion with 10th SFG Commander and selected staff. Attendees in addition to NCFA commissioners and staff:

COL Isaac Peltier, Commander, 10th SFG (A)
LTC James Bekurs, XO, 10th SFG (A)
CCWO Kirk Teaney, CCWO, 10th SFG (A)
CSM Lou Pauka, CSM, 10th SFG (A)
MAJ Michael Lueckeman, S3, 10th SFG (A)
MAJ Matthew Chaney, S3, 10th SFG (A)
MAJ Matthew Crawford, S2, 10th SFG (A)
CW3 Jerry Brown, S8, 10th SFG (A)
LTC Stephen Weidenbeck, Commander, 5th BN, 19th SFG (UTARNG)
CPT Clint Davis, Assistant Operations Officer, 5th BN, 19th SFG (A)
CW3 Andrew Hilton, Operations Warrant Officer, 5th BN, 19th SFG (A)
COL Adam Silvers, Commander Special Operations Detachment Korea (COARNG)
LTC Douglas Paul, G3 Special Operations Detachment Korea (COARNG)

The meeting convened at approximately 1355 when ADFO explained the relevant Federal Advisory Committee Act provisions and how these applied to the meeting.

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The discussion focused on the high pace of operations around the world. 10th SFG has five battalions and at any given time has hundreds of Soldiers deployed in over 20 countries primarily in Europe and Africa. There is a higher demand for 10th SFG elements than the unit can fulfill, taskings far exceed manpower and funding. 10th SFG conducts training with allies in Europe, where many allies have small, but significant SF capabilities.

The unit's current ratio of time on deployment to dwell is 1:1. The average Soldier is deployed about half a year (generally 179 days or less), and then home for six months. The goal is to get the deployment to dwell ratio down to 1:2, but they are unsure how or when this will happen.

Discussed Army tendencies to deploy large operational headquarters and offered that US should use SF units more traditionally with smaller elements that have less command and control for more independent operations, which are more sustainable over time.

19th SFG personnel noted the biggest problem for ARNG SF units and personnel is funding for pay and allowances. ARNG are not paid for some required training time (e.g., online training). The unit has travel money, but not enough money in the duty pay and allowance categories to conduct required training and occasional operational deployments. Soldiers average four months a year on active duty primarily for required language, regional, and weapons training. ARNG SF units/personnel are only able to contribute on planned operational deployment about once every four years.

The meeting adjourned at 1505 and NCFA personnel moved by van to 168th Regional Training Institute (RTI), Building 9121, Fort Carson.

Attendees at the RTI in addition to NCFA personnel were:

COL Jesse Morehouse, Regimental Commander 168th RTI
CSM James Bunch, Warrior Leader's Course Commandant
MAJ Robert Weeks, Regimental Operations Officer
LTC Rick Burt, Centennial Training Site, Commander
CSM Brandon Marx, Centennial Training Site, Command Sergeants Major
MAJ Bryan Murphy, Centennial Training Site, Executive Officer

Commissioner Thurman offered opening remarks at 1345 about the NCFA's purpose, mission and legal requirements. ADFO then explained the Federal Advisory Committee and the Government in the Sunshine Acts' statutory requirements, and how these requirements applied to the meeting.

Discussion focused on the RTI's mission, capabilities, utilization, relationship with 4ID and rest of Fort Carson. The 168th RTI at the Centennial Training Site is a modern, self-contained training facility with space to house up to a battalion of Soldiers for training. Training site includes two dining facilities, an arms room, and training facilities in addition to barracks for Soldiers going through training courses.

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Currently, the RTI is underutilized with only 30% of the beds used at any one time. The location has been used by Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps, Civil Air Patrol, and Bureau of Land Management organizations in addition to Colorado National Guard units.

As a result of a pilot program initiated by the Army in 2009, the WLC located at the RTI has a multi-component cadre. RTI personnel noted some of the challenges and lessons learned with the multi-component cadre of the Warrior Leader Course (now renamed the Basic Leader Course). The 23 WLC instructors include 17 Regular Army, three National Guard, and three Army Reserve Soldiers. Between 2010 and 2015, the WLC has graduated 10,536 Soldiers: 9,057 Active Component, 652 National Guard, and 727 USAR.

The vast majority of the WLC students are active component from Fort Carson, while some National Guard Soldiers come from outside of Colorado. However, the RTI has underutilized capacity. The 54 RTIs (one for each state and territory) do not appear to coordinate amongst the States. Improved efficiencies by consolidating some courses in regional locations are possible. The comment was made that the One Army School System seems to be a suggestion not a requirement.

The current arrangement between the RTI and Fort Carson is mutually beneficial to the 4ID and the Colorado NG. The RTI is exploring ways to improve upon this relationship and is looking to establish an Infantry Advanced Leader Course (ALC) at the RTI in the future.

The multi-compo WLC at Fort Carson was the proof of concept and the Army will establish five more multi-compo WLC's in the next five years. A second multi-compo WLC is hosted by the Louisiana National Guard at Camp Cook, LA, and has more National Guard instructors than the Fort Carson WLC.

The multi-component WLC has been a success that should be expanded to include additional courses and locations. Peer learning among Soldiers from all components enhances their understanding and respect for each other.

There are challenges with Army and DOD policies supporting multi-component efforts. The lack of integration between active and reserve personnel and training computer systems is a difficult challenge. Likewise, differing assignment policies create difficulties for instructors and other personnel assigned to the units due to lack of synchronization and predictability. Different appropriations for personnel and operations can make funding difficult to figure out. Different Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) schemes for Title 10 and Title 32 personnel require careful coordination to ensure a commander can take action in disciplinary cases.

The meeting adjourned at 1640 and NCFA personnel moved to their hotel by van for overnight lodging before returning home.